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The Director
Central Intelligence Agency

Washington, D.C. 20505

January 19, 1977

To My Fellow Employees:

It's time to go now, and yet it seems as if I have just begun.

First, I want to say Thank You to all. I have never been associated with any institution that gives its leadership more cooperation and more support. I wish I could thank each of you personally.

As I leave the Agency and the Intelligence Community there are a few personal observations I would like to make.

First, I believe it is essential that the American people give this Agency its full and unqualified support. The world we live in demands no less. The support for the Agency was shaken during the height of the public hearings in 1975. It was shaken, not only because of a handful of abuses that did take place and which indeed had been remedied before the hearings took place; but also it was shaken even more by the endless stream of allegations which were untrue but which were given great attention.

This is changing now, and it is changing for the better. We are still slugged at times with unfair criticism, but the sensationalism is giving way now to legitimate inquiry; the adversary relationship with Congress has given way to thorough and constructive oversight; the frantic search for reorganization and dismantlement has given way to a legitimate search for ways to improve things.

It is essential that CIA continue to work with the Congress, with the rest of the Executive Branch, and to some degree with the public, to demonstrate that CIA the Reality is very different from CIA the Myth. We are cooperating fully with all concerned; and this is bound to result in the Truth. We honor the Truth; we do not fear it.

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Secondly, we should continue to strive for fair and better legislation to protect sources and methods of obtaining intelligence. We should do all we possibly can to guard against unauthorized leaks, and I strongly urge that we have a reawakening of the need for present and past employees to honor their security commitments. No foreign intelligence organization can be run without careful adherence to security, and we should be ever mindful of the fact that security is everyone's job.

Thirdly, I am pleased with the way the President's Executive Order has been faithfully implemented. All components have cooperated fully. As a result we are operating within the guidelines--guidelines designed to safeguard the rights of private citizens. To deserve the confidence of the American people, we must continue to operate, as we are now, within the law, responsive to Congressional and Executive oversight. I congratulate all for working to make the Executive Order effective.

Lastly, a word about the Dedication here. I have been privileged to serve in many fascinating assignments in public and private life, but nowhere else have I ever encountered the same degree of unselfish dedication to country as I have encountered here at CIA. I thank each and every one of you for the cooperation you have given me over the past year. I know you will give our new Director the same support you have given me.

I am leaving CIA now, but I take with me many happy memories. Even the tough, unsolved problems don't seem so awesome; for they are overshadowed by our successes and by the fact that we do provide the best foreign intelligence in the world. I am leaving, but I am not forgetting. I hope I can find some ways in the years ahead to make the American people understand more fully the greatness that is CIA.

Sincerely,

George Bush

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